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VOLUME XIII

GABRIEL GILBERT

(1620?-1680?)

A PORTION OF A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE BOARD OF UNIVERSITY STUDIES
OF THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY
IN CONFORMITY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

1927

BY

ELEANOR J. PELLET

THE JOHNS HOPKINS PRESS
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

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CHAPITRE PREMIER

LIFE

Gabriel Gilbert is all but unknown today. He is so entirely forgotten that his name is without significance save to a very restricted group. An occasional student of seventeenth century literature has observed the name upon rare instances as that of a lesser contemporary of one of the great writers of the period. Yet Gilbert was, in his own time, an author of repute. His composition for the theatre brought him into contact, either through his works or personally, with Corneille, Racine and Molière. His *Rodogune*, a contemporary and rival of Corneille's tragedy of the same name, became in the next generation, the subject of a heated discussion which involved charges of plagiarism. Comparison with the work of Racine is provoked by Gilbert's theatre in two instances : *Hypolite*, which suggests *Phèdre*, and *Arie et Pétus*, which recalls *Britannicus*. His pieces were produced by Molière's company. He wrote tragedies, tragi-comedies, comedies, and one opera. This last occupies an important place in the history of French opera, and yet its author is forgotten. " Il est assurément peu de noms aujourd'hui plus inconnus ", is the testimony of a student of Gilbert's contemporaries (1). This name stands first in M. Lanson's

(1) FOURNEL (Victor), *les Contemporains de Molière*, Paris, 1875, II, 3.

list of " les principaux auteurs de cette période peu étudiés " (1). It is given a place by Bédier et Hazard, who, citing the titles of tragedies of the year 1647, name, third in the list, *Sémiramis* by Gilbert (2). The same authors mention the name again as that of the author of a work known to them by title only (3). The name is mentioned by Lachèvre in his discussion of the authorship of *Mélisse* (4). These notices are unusual, for the majority of the remarks in general works of reference or, more rarely, in the biography of a contemporary call attention merely to the obscurity of Gilbert, and note the forgetfulness of posterity as a just reward of his work.

Gilbert's name is found in Le Long's *Bibliothèque Historique de la France* (5), not under the division *auteurs*, but under *personnes*, where *Poète IV 47457* refers to the *Notice in le Parnasse Français* (6). In the work thus referred to by the later compiler, the *Notice* states that Gilbert's works « lui ont acquis quelque réputation dans le xvii^e siècle » (7), while Phérotée de la Croix, still nearer to the poet's period, places Gilbert fifth in a list of *Neuf poètes du troisième ordre suivant le tems* (8), between Pierre Corneille and Racine. La Croix says that Gilbert was a *bel esprit*, that he had *quelque réputation dans ce siècle*, and that of his works *Endimion* especially *a été si bien reçu* (9).

(1) *Esquisse d'une histoire de la tragédie française*, New-York, Columbia University Press, 1920, p. 78.

(2) *Histoire de la Littérature française illustrée*, Paris, s. d., I, 284.

(3) Cf. *op. cit.*, II, 7.

(4) Cf. LACHÈVRE, Frédéric, *Les Œuvres de Jean Dehénault*, Paris, Champion, 1922.

(5) LE LONG, *Bibliothèque Historique de la France*, Paris, 1775, *Tables*, vol. V.

(6) *Loc. cit.*, *Table*, V, p. 242.

(7) TITON DE TILLET, *Le Parnasse français*, Paris, 1732, p. 386.

(8) *L'Art de la Poésie française et latine*, Lyon, 1694, pp. 419, et 422.

(9) *Op. cit.*, p. 393.

La Croix attributes only seven pieces to Gilbert (1). Somaize, in *le Dictionnaire des prélieuses*, speaks of Gilbert under the name of « Gallus » (2), and accords him the standing of « bon poète » (3).

To day, with the exception of his published work, few traces of Gilbert are to be found. Yet, success of no mean measure seems to have attended his literary career at the outset. In proof of this fact one has only to cite the five plays published between the years of 1641 and 1647. Gilbert knew, apparently upon terms of intimacy, some of the leading literary figures of the time. And yet, after this period of activity and of favorable comment from well-known men of letters there intervenes a silence, almost absolute, which lasts for ten years. In his chosen field this silence is unbroken. At its close, the theatre again becomes the focus of his interest. The explanation of his withdrawal and later return to a work which was evidently Gilbert's chief concern remains hidden by the mystery which obscures so large a portion of his life. Each of these acts constitutes a problem as yet unsolved. So great is the difficulty encountered in the endeavor to establish the fact that the author of the works which still exist lived at any certain time in any certain place, that, were not the testimony of the works incontestable, one would be justified after long and all but fruitless research in asking if such a person ever really did live. Had there been concerted action on the part of the poet and his friends to conceal the facts of his life the result could have differed little from existing circumstances.

The earliest date discovered thus far in connection with Gilbert is a reference by Chapelain in a letter of July, 1640, to Conrart : « M^r. Gilbert eust bien souhaitté

(1) *Les Héraclides, Thelephonte, Endimion, Arie et Petus ou les Amours de Néron, Les Amours d'Angélique et de Médor, Les Intrigues amoureuses, Les Amours d'Ovide*,

(2) I, 189-190.

(3) II, 239.

aussy que vous eussiez assisté à la représentation de *sa Marguerite françoise.....* » (1). The evidence that Gilbert's *Marguerite de France* had been composed and seen upon the stage in Paris before July 4, 1640, and that this event was of interest to the writer and his friend Conrart is indisputable. Reference to the occasion as a *première* of the author makes equally incontestable the fact that with the presentation of this play Gilbert was introduced as an author of drama to the Parisian public. Wanting information of earlier facts of the author's life, his biography must begin with the record of this first success.

Gilbert is generally conceded to have been of the protestant faith (2), though of this fact there is no extant evidence (3). No question has ever been made of the poet's connection with the protestant church, and there is no reason to doubt it. He is the subject of an article in *la France protestante* (4), is called « Calviniste » by Phérotée de la Croix (5), while Beauchamps says, « de la religion protestante » (6) and Goujet's phrase is : « de la Religion prétendue Réformée » (7). Dopping, in his monograph on Herwarth, the protestant financier, mentions Gilbert as a *coreligionaire* (8). There is like-

(1) *Lettres de Chapelain*, éd. Tamizey de Larroque, 1880-1883, I, 656, n° 2.

(2) The dictionaries of biography and the encyclopedias all make this statement. So recent and carefully edited a work as the *Bibliographie des Recueils Collectifs de Poésie*, by F. Lachèvre, repeats it (II, 293).

(3) Since the registers containing the data of marriages, births and deaths kept at the Hôtel de Ville were destroyed by fire during the Commune, the only source of information is the extracts of those registers, giving data of protestant families, kept at the *Société du protestantisme en France*, rue des Saints-Pères. The name of Gabriel Gilbert is not found in these lists.

(4) Eug. et Em. HAAG, *La France Protestante*, Paris, 1846-1858.

(5) *Op. cit.*, p. 393.

(6) *Recherches sur les Théâtres de France*, Paris, 1735, II, 168.

(7) *Bibliothèque françoise et histoire de la littérature françoise*, Paris 1756, XVIII, p. 90.

(8) *Un Banquier protestant en France au XVII^e siècle, Barthélemy Herwarth, Contrôleur Général des Finances (1607-1676)*, Paris 1879, p. 341.

wise no reasonable doubt of the truth of the constantly repeated statement that Gilbert was a native of Paris (1).

The dates of Gilbert's birth and death are equally unknown. Lacking authentic data, the authors of the articles in encyclopedias and dictionaries of biography have apparently trusted to conjecture, and one editor has followed another. The statement that Gilbert was born « about 1610 » is that which is met in the greater number of cases (2). One or two editors prefer « about 1620 ». The date of the poet's death is usually given as 1680 (3), and this ascription is with more logic since the second edition of the translation of the Psalms, published in that year, bears upon its title-page the author's name preceded by « *feu* ». TITON DE TILLET says that in the uncertainty of the exact time of the death of Gilbert, « on l'a placé après Perrin » (4). In a few instances a date as early as 1674, 1675, or 1676, is chosen (5). No reason has been given for this selection. It may be that the editors, unaware of the Psalms published during Gilbert's lifetime, acquainted only with the edition alluded to above, in which the author's demise is mentioned, attempted to fix a date between that of the opera of 1672 and that of this edition.

There is no discoverable record of Gilbert's birth. In neither preface nor dedicatory epistle does the author allude to facts of his life from which a date might be

(1) Cf. Phérotée de la Croix, *op. cit.*, p. 393 ; TITON DE TILLET, *op. cit. loc. cit.* ; Beauchamps, *op. cit.*, II, 168 ; Goujet, *op. cit., loc. cit.*

(2) Les frères PARFAICT, *Histoire du Théâtre français*, Paris, 1747-48, and most of the modern works of biography, MICHAUD, *Biographie universelle* ; DIDOT, *Biographie générale* ; LACHÈVRE, *Bibliographie des recueils collectifs*, p. 87, and many others.

(3) BEAUCHAMPS, « Vers 1680 », *op. cit.*, II, 168 ; GOUJET, *op. cit., loc. cit.*, TITON DE TILLET, *op. cit.*, 386, 387 ; LE LONG, *op. cit., loc. cit.*

(4) *Op. cit., loc. cit.*

(5) Cf. CHAUDON et DELANDINE, *Nouveau Dictionnaire historique, Critique et Biographique*, 1804, art. « Gilbert » ; frères PARFAICT, « 1676 », VI, 119, 120 ; also, DOPPING, *op. cit.*, « vers 1675 », p. 340.

approximated. The first authentic date we possess is Chapelain's reference to the *première* of *Marguerite de France* in 1640. The only allusion to his age made by the poet is in the *épître* of *l'Art de plaire des dames* dedicated to the Queen of Sweden. Here Gilbert uses the words « ma jeune Muse ». The *privilège* of this work was granted in March, 1654. How old was the author who produced an artistic success in 1640 and who calls himself young in 1654 ? Had he been born in 1610, he would have been rather mature for the production of a first work in 1640. Still more impossible is it to imagine his alluding to his young muse in 1654. *Marguerite de France*, though correct in versification and creditable from the standpoint of characterization, yet possesses some weaknesses dramatically which might indicate the youth and inexperience of the author. It seems probable that the author of this first play was about twenty, and that the *épître* of *l'Art de plaire* was written before the fourth decade of the author's life had advanced too far for him to refer to himself in terms of modest youth. It may be advanced as a reasonable hypothesis that the poet was born about 1620.

A date for his death may be assigned with somewhat more precision. The last work of Gilbert, published many years after his play-writing had come to an end, was the translation of fifty of the Psalms. The publication of this work occurred in 1680, as has been said above (1). The *permis d'imprimer* is of May 26 of that year. The *attestation* (as to the doctrinal soundness of the work) is dated May 24. A second printing must have been planned almost at once. This, according to the assertion of the title-page, was reviewed and corrected by the author. It received the additions of the *Décalogue* and the *Cantique de Simeon*. The attestation for these additions to the work bears the date of July 23; the permission for printing is dated two days later. The attestation

(1) Cf. *above*, p.

of July 23 names the author « feu M. Gilbert ». There is naturally a possibility that his death had occurred before the date of the first attestation but had not been made known to the officer whose signature is affixed. But it seems probable that Gilbert died between the dates of May 24 and July 23, 1680. Since, in the *Préface* of his *Psaumes*, Gilbert speaks of the version made by Conrart and of the violence done the work of Conrart by the editors of his posthumous work, it is evident that Gilbert was living in 1677, the date of the first edition of Conrart's Psalms, and makes probable his knowledge of the second edition of 1679. The remarks about Conrart's work support the theory that Gilbert's death occurred as late as 1680 (1).

While the name Gilbert is not uncommon in France, it has not been possible to connect the poet with any family of his name. The *Archives Nationales*, at Paris, contain no record which gives a clue to Gilbert's family connection. The name Gabriel Gilbert appears in the records of *les officiers de Toulouse* in the sixteenth century. The bearer of the name, *Trésorier et receveur ordinaire du domaine du Roi en la sénéchausée de Carcassonne*, is mentioned under the dates of November 9, 1568 (2), May 23, 1569 (3), and September 1, 1584 (4). Between the date of the last of these three entries and that of the death of the poet there is a lapse of a century. There may be a possibility that this *trésorier* of Carcassonne, a section where protestantism was strong, was an ancestor of the playwright and poet of the seventeenth century, but there is no proof of the fact.

(1) Cf. KERVILER et BARTHÉLEMY, *Valentin Conrart, sa vie et sa correspondance*, Paris, 1881, p. 160, and n. 2 ; also, Bourgoïn, A. *Un Bourgeois de Paris, Valentin Conrart...*, Paris, 1883, p. 307.

(2) The entry is of a *vérification aux lettres*, n° 1, A², 54.

(3) N° 1, A², 66.

(4) *Ibidem*, under date given. For these notes from the *Palais de Justice* of Toulouse, I am indebted to the kindness of Dr Esther Crooks, of Johns Hopkins University.

Another group of notes on certain Gilberts fails to exhibit an identity of names, as in the instance cited above, but on account of the similarity of profession, suggests a possibility of relationship. Two persons of the name are noted as secretaries of the duc de Guise. The title is borne by a Guillaume Gilbert in a record dated June 11, 1617 (1), and by a Claude Gilbert under dates of December 5, 1615, and April 19, 1618 (2). If a family connection with either of these secretaries of the duc de Guise could be established, it might be possible to go a step farther and see in that relationship the source of the introduction of the poet to the Queen of Sweden. It was the duc de Guise who was sent by the queen regent as her representative to welcome Christine upon her first entry into France. It was at the home of the duc de Guise that the reading of a « comédie » by Gilbert occurred, related by Ménage (3). There is much temptation to consider seriously the possibilities of this relation. The scholarship of the poet might be regarded as a natural possession, could a family connection be established with the private secretaries of a noble of the importance of the duc de Guise. But again, there is no evidence to confirm conjecture.

Gilbert seems to have possessed a broad and, for the period, sound education, but there is no means of knowing where it was acquired. At a time when the majority were content with superficiality (4), Gilbert's learning indicates early opportunity. It is conceded that Gilbert

(1) Cf. *Insinuations du Chatelet* (Archives Nationales, Paris), VI, 1188, where there is a record of a donation from the baron François de Bassompierre to Guillaume Gilbert, *secrétaire du duc de Guise*, Cf. 185).

(2) Cf. *ibid.*, VI, 1660, declarations about a will and a contract of a person named, deceased, and Claude Gilbert, *secrétaire du duc de Guise* (fo 143). I am indebted for these notes to Dr Josephine de Boer of Johns Hopkins University who kindly communicated them to me.

(3) Cf. *Ménagiana*, I, 439 (éd. Delaulne, 1715).

(4) Cf. LANSON, *Histoire de la littérature française*, Paris, 1912, pp. 379-389.

was a Greek scholar (1). His knowledge of Hebrew is attested by his *Préface* of the *Cinquante Psaumes* which makes clear the fact that the work was a translation and not a new version of an older translation (2). Familiarity with Italian authors of the preceding century is seen in his use of Italian stories as sources of certain of his plots (3). It may be claimed for Gilbert that his education was more thorough and his culture broader than that of the majority of the contemporary authors of second rank.

The reference to Gilbert in Chapelain's letter is sufficiently casual to denote a degree of intimacy which obviates any necessity of explanations as to the identity of the young author. Had the circumstances been different, we might have expected some note which would have given a hint of the author's personality. The first work, published in 1641, (4) is dedicated to the duchess d'Aiguillon. An *épître* of the conventionally flattering type is signed « G. G. » and provides no personal information of the owner of the initials. The name of the author does not appear upon the title-page, and the *privilege* is to the publisher Courbé. A second edition of *Marguerite de France* was published the following year (5). In the same year *Téléphonte* was printed (6). This second work is dedicated to the patroness of the first. The initials « G. G. » are again found as signature of the *épître*. We learn as additional contribution to the author's biography only that his patroness had honored him by selecting this play for private presentation (7). The following year the ode to Anne of Austria, acclaim-

(1) Cf. *Œuvres de Racine* (éd. Grs. Ecriv.), III, 322, n., where Mesnard remarks Gilbert's happy translation of Euripides.

(2) Cf., below, p.

(3) Cf. Chaps. on *le Courtisan Parfait* and *Angélique et Médor*.

(4) Cf. below, chap. II.

(5) Cf. below, chap. II.

(6) Cf. below, chap. II, sec. II.

(7) Cf. *Epître* of *Téléphonte*.

ing her regency, was published (1). Possibly *Rodogune* was seen during the next year, 1644, but this is not certain (2). The work was published two years later, 1646 (3). The *épître* of *Rodogune*, addressed to the duc d'Orleans is the first to be signed « Gilbert ». *Hypolite* published the same year and dedicated to the duchesse de Sully again gives the author's last name in full as signature of the *épître* (4). The ode to the Queen of Sweden may have been composed in this year, as is stated in the *Table* of *les Poésies diverses*, though about the date of this work there is much confusion (5). *Sémiramis* was probably presented this same year, since it was published in 1647 (6). This volume is dedicated to the duchesse de Rohan. Gilbert claims, in his dedicatory epistle, the honor of serving, or of having served, the duchess : « *On sçavoit que j'avois l'honneur d'estre à vostre service* » (7). This is the first personal word from the poet. It is the basis for the generally accepted theory that Gilbert was at the time of indicting his *épître* secretary to the duchess. The only contradictory hypothesis is one with no certain evidence to support it. Viguier believed that Gilbert was in the employ of Gaston d'Orleans when *Rodogune* was written (8). The only foundation for this statement is an allusion to the banks of the Loire as Gilbert's residence. The verses cited (9) are part of a poem whose date of composition may be 1646, and may be 1651 (10). Another work of Gilbert's, dedicated to Mademoiselle de Montpensier in 1650, might be added to the slender support which Viguier has brought to

(1) Cf. below, chap. XI.

(2) Cf. p. , below.

(3) Cf.

(4) Cf. p. , below.

(5) Cf. below, chap. XI, sec. I.

(6) Cf. p. , below.

(7) *Épître* of *Sémiramis*.

(8) Cf. discussion of this point in chapter, below, *Rodogune*.

(9) Cf. below, chap. XI, *Poésies Diverses*,

(10) Cf. chap. XI, below.

his hypothesis. This *Panéggyrique des Dames* seems to be composed for oral presentation before *la Grande Mademoiselle* : *Ayant à parler devant Vostre Altesse Royale*, are the opening words of the *épître*. There is no evidence in contradiction of a theory that Gilbert was in the employ of Gaston d'Orléans from the year in which *Rodogune* was written through 1650, or 1651. Neither is there definite evidence to confirm it. The only fact is Gilbert's statement in the *épître* to the duchesse de Rohan which makes it appear that he was in the service of the duchess at about the date of the publication of *Sémi-ramis*. The usually accepted theory of Gilbert's occupation of the office of secretary to the duchesse de Rohan at this time is strengthened by the fact that the epitaph of Tancrède de Rohan (1) is by Gilbert. This much discussed son of the duchesse de Rohan took part in the Fronde and was killed at Vincennes, at the age of nineteen. By a decree of Parlement, February 6, 1646, Tancrède had been forbidden to use the name or to bear the arms of Rohan (2). The *affaire Tancrède* had deepened the feeling of hostility between the duchesse de Rohan and her daughter Marguerite de Rohan-Chabot, who had incurred her mother's displeasure by a marriage contrary to the wishes of the duchess. The lines written by Gilbert represent the party of the duchess in the family quarrel and the point of view of the mother of the youth :

Rohan qui combattit pour délivrer la France,
Est mort dans la captivité :
Son nom lui fut à tort, en vivant, disputé ;
Mais son illustre mort a prouvé sa naissance.

(1) Cf. MARTIN, Henri, *Histoire de Tancrède de Rohan*, Paris, 1856 ; GRIFFET (P.), *Histoire de Tancrède de Rohan*, Liège, 1767 ; MICHAUD, *Nouvelle collection des mémoires relatifs à l'histoire de France*, « Notice sur Henri duc de Rohan, » XIX, 490 ; MICHAUD, *Biographie universelle*, art. « Rohan, Tancrède de » ; HAAG, *France protestant*, art. « Rohan » ; MICHAUD, *op. cit.*, art. « Rohan ».

(2) Notice, *Mémoires du duc de Rohan*, *cit. sup*, *loc cit.*

Il est mort glorieux pour la cause d'autrui ;
 C'est pour le Parlement qu'il entra dans la lice :
 Il a tout fait pour la Justice,
 Et la Justice rien pour lui (1).

The verses which accomplish both praise of the fallen hero and reproach to the body which withheld his name from him, echo the claims of the duchess and, while not proof that the writer is in her employ, give considerable support to that theory. It seems fitting that a member of a famous protestant family should have a protestant secretary.

The verses in honor of Tancrède and the prose *Panegyrique des dames*, of 1649 and 1650, respectively, are the only signs of the poet's literary activity between *Sémiramis* and the *Ode* to the Queen of Sweden composed in 1651. Gilbert appears as the author of *vers liminaires*, accompanying the poetical works of Charles de Beys, published in 1651. He celebrates his friend de Beys in an *épigramme* « A M. Beys sur ses Poésies », as follows :

Ce chagrin Legislatateur
 Qui bannit de sa Republique
 La Poésie et la Musique,
 N'avoit pas leu cet Auteur :
 Beys, avec tant de grace,
 Des mensonges du Parnasse,
 Fait un Art pour nous charmer,
 Et dans sa Muse immortelle,
 Il nous peint l'erreur si belle,
 Qu'il nous force de l'aymer (2).

He signs his tribute « Gilbert ».

In 1654 the *privilèges* for l'*Art de plaire* and *les Poésies diverses*, granted the author in his own name, seem to indicate his presence in Paris. What his occupation was

(1) GRIFFET, *op. cit.*, p. 56, and MICHAUD, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*

(2) *Les Œuvres Poétiques de Beys*, Paris, Quinet, *vers liminaires*, 1651.

at this time can only be conjectured, for we have no information on that point. The duchess of Rohan was still living, and Gilbert may have continued as her secretary. Or more exacting employment may have left no leisure for writing. *L'Art de plaire* was published in 1655, but the *privilège* of the *Poésies* was neglected until the collection was printed with the addition of poems of later date, in 1661. There is a possibility that the poet went to Italy in 1654, for the next authentic date to be noted is in connection with his return from that country to France.

Where Gilbert met the Queen of Sweden and entered her service, when this important event of his life occurred, and the manner in which the relation was brought about are questions answered thus far only by silence. This silence is the more regrettable since the connection with the Queen of Sweden is a fact of the utmost importance in the biography of Gilbert. It is ordinarily assumed that Gilbert became the secretary of Christine in 1657. This is the date in which he announces himself in that office by adding the title to his name in connection with his published works. The printing of *les Amours de Diane et d'Endimion* provided the occasion. It is natural that evidence of his appointment being unobtainable (1) the office should be dated from the first known claim to it on the author's part. Certain writers believe that Gilbert was called to Sweden by the queen and entered her service there, before her abdication. « Etre appelé à la cour de Suède devenait le rêve de chaque poète français : Ménage, Scudéry, G. Gilbert, U. Chevreau, d'autres encore rimaient à qui mieux mieux en l'honneur de Christine », says Bernardin in his work on Tristan l'Hermitte (2). The poet who is the subject of this work

(1) Application to the *archivistes* of the *Archives des Affaires Etrangères*, resulted in the reply that no record of the appointment of Gilbert as the Secretary and Résident in France of the Queen of Sweden has been found.

(2) *Un Précurseur de Racine : Tristan l'Hermite*, Paris, 1895, p. 287.

is said to have had an ardent desire to « se réfugier, comme Gilbert et Chevreau, auprès de la reine de Suède » (1). This statement, so far as it concerns Gilbert, appears to be unwarranted. Had Gilbert served the Queen of Sweden in her own country, he would doubtless have been known to Arckenholtz, the chief biographer of Christine. But this author speaks of the poet as « ce Gilbert » (2), which seems to indicate one known through report only. Arckenholtz makes mention of Gilbert first in : « Gilbert devint son Résident en France, où il l'étoit encore en 1657 » (3). Again, the Swedish biographer says : « Le Sr Gilbert étoit Résident de Christine auprès de la Cour de France à son arrivée à Paris » (4). Further allusion by Arckenholtz, again on the uncorroborated authority of another, supplies a possible reason for the poet's presence in Italy before his period of employment by Christine. A reference to *l'Art de plaire* is made and the fact that the work was translated into English mentioned, whereupon the queen's biographer adds : « Le traducteur présume que l'Auteur de cette histoire a été autrefois au service du Marquis de Lavardin Ambassadeur de France à Rome, et ensuite à celui de Christine » (5). The person who has taken the most infinite pains to inform himself of every detail in the life of the Queen of Sweden is unable to speak with certainty of the term of office of minor persons (a *Résident* and *secrétaire des commandements* would be such) (6) who were from time to time in the employ of his queen. Among the documents relative to the « Cérémonie de la réception de Christine de Suède à Paris » (7) is a sonnet

(1) *Ibid.*, p. 289.

(2) Cf. ARCKENHOLTZ (Johann), *Mémoires concernant Christine, reine de Suède...*, Amsterdam, 1751-1760 (4 tomes en 2 vol.), 4^o, I, 255, n^o .

(3) *Op. cit.*, I, 255.

(4) *Op. cit.*, II, 18, n^o .

(5) *Op. cit.*, I, Préf. v. n^o .

(6) « In the XVIIth century «résident» was a grade half diplomatic and half consular », le baron de Bildt, *Christine de Suède et le cardinal Azzolino*, Paris, 1899, p. 34, n^o 1.

(7) *Archives des Affaires Etrangères*, n^o 1836, f^o 172.

by le Sr G., entitled *Sur l'affection que sa Majesté porte aux Muses*. The sonnet begins :

Étrange changement des fortunes du monde
Apollon tout en feu passe aux glaces du Nord (1).

It is presumable that the verses were composed by Gilbert. As the queen always demanded that she be received with ceremony befitting her rank upon her entrance into a city (2), this poem doubtless was recited before Christine upon the occasion of her entrance into Paris on the eighth of September, 1656 (3). A theory which would permit the adoption of the date 1654, were there evidence to support it, is advanced by Goujet who assumes that Gilbert was in the queen's service when he dedicated to her the *Art de plaire*. He says : « Il était attaché à la Reine de Suède, lorsqu'il donna en 1655 *L'Art de plaire*, qu'il dédia à cette Reine » (4). Since the *privilege* of this work is dated March, 1654, could Goujet's assumption that the author was already in the queen's employ when he dedicated the work to her be proved, this date could be substituted for his hypothetical 1655. The latter date has support from an entirely different quarter. Baron Bildt gives the name of Gilbert in the list of persons composing the court (« la nouvelle cour ») of the queen. In a note he states his authority : the name occurs in a list « envoyée à Rome par le légat Holstenius (de Mantoue, 21 octobre 1655) » ; the list is found in Arch. Vatican, Miscell, I, 19, c. 263 (5).

Gilbert's connection with the Queen of Sweden is

(1) *Ibid.*, *ibid.*

(2) « ...likes to be received with honors and have an entrée into any city with éclat... » Tr. from ms. letter to Mazarin from Leissens, July 31, 1656 ; *Archives des Affaires Etrangères*, F. français, n° 900, fo 236.

(3) Cf. BILDT, *op. cit.*, p. 54, and other biographies.

(4) *Op. cit.*, XVIII, 88, 89.

(5) *Op. cit.*, 39 et note.

shown indisputably in a letter from de Leissens to Mazarin, dated Marseilles, July 31, 1656. The writer encloses a letter from Christine to Mazarin in answer to one which he has handed the queen from the cardinal. In submitting to his superior the request of the queen of Sweden that she may see their majesties, he adds that she desires to see him (Mazarin) a half day before. He continues : « Le S^r Gilbert secrétaire de sa Majesté m'a tesmoigné qu'il souhaiteroit fort pouvoir voir V. E. avant que la Reine la vît » (1). This letter leaves no doubt of the fact that Gilbert occupied the office of secretary to the queen when she landed in France the last of July, 1656. He doubtless came to Paris with the queen, presented his sonnet as part of the *cérémonie* of her welcome to the city, and remained in France with her that summer. The queen took leave of the court, which was then at Compiègne, the twenty-third of September (2). After visiting Ninon de Lenclos, she started back to Italy, crossed the Mt. Cenis, October 13, and arrived in Turin the sixteenth (3). In November, the queen is in Pesaro, where she lingers through the winter and until the following June « à cause de la peste à Rome » (4). It was at Pesaro that the queen enchanted Azzolino's agent, Lescaris, by reading a French comedy which related the love of Diane and Endimion (5). We might presume that Gilbert remained in Paris, as « Résident », were it not for a letter from the queen to her Swedish friend, the Countess Ebba Sparre. In this letter, which invites the countess to come to Pesaro, is enclosed a madrigal by Gilbert (6). From this it may

(1) *Archives des Affaires Etrangères*, F. Fr. 900, f^o 236 (ms. lettres à Mazarin).

(2) Cf. BILDT, *op. cit.*, p. 60 ; ARCKENHOLTZ, *op. cit.*, I, 545, etc.

(3) Cf. BILDT, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

(4) Letter of Christine to the Countess Ebba Sparre (Pesaro, March 27, 1657), cf. ARCKENHOLTZ, *op. cit.*, partie I, 559.

(5) Cf. below, chap. VI, and Bildt, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

(6) Cf. ARCKENHOLTZ, *op. cit.*, I, 559, n^o ; GILBERT, *Poésies diverses*, p. 150.

be presumed that the poet was with Christine in Italy during the winter of 1656-57. Pesaro is not far from Fano, the scene of *le Courtisan Parfait*. The former city continued to be the residence of the queen until midsummer, when she began to turn her steps toward France again. She pauses in Lyons on her way to Paris and makes every effort to remove the suspicion attached to her movements and to receive an invitation to Paris. In October she is permitted to come as far as Fontainebleau. Here the assassination of Monaldeschi occurred the tenth of November, 1657 (1).

It seems likely that Gilbert was sent back to France on some diplomatic mission in the spring of 1657. On the 28 th of May, 1657, the *privilège* of *les Amours de Diane et d'Endimion* was granted, and upon the same day that of *Chresphonte* (2). The poet is named in the *privilège* with his title of *Résident*, and the queen is referred to as *notre chère sœur*. It may be at this period that the secretary went to England, if indeed he ever did go, and this mission may be the journey which provided Ménage with the material for his story about Gilbert's fear of the Channel trip. Ménage says : « Les Poètes... ne sont pas naturellement fort hardis. M. Gilbert vouloit aller en Angleterre voir M. de Croissy qui y étoit alors notre Ambassadeur. Il fut un mois à Calais, ne trouvant jamais la Mer assez calme pour hazarder le trajet. Tous les soirs il comptoit avec son hôte, mais, dès qu'il étoit prêt à s'embarquer la crainte le prenoit, et il s'en retournoit à l'Auberge » (3). There might be presumed a connection between this story and the incident related by Arckenholtz, on the authority of another. The Swedish biographer cites Gregorio Leti (4), author of a *Life of Cromwell* : « Elle aura dépêché à Cromwell son

(1) Cf. BILDT, *op. cit.*, p. 74 ; ARCKENHOLTZ, *op. cit.*, I, partie II, 2 ; *Mém. de M^{lle} de Montpensier* (MICHAUD, vol. 28, 279, n° 1).

(2) Cf. chap. VI, below.

(3) *Ménagiana* (éd. cit.), III, 88, 89.

(4) « Comme le rapporte Gregorio Leti », *Op. cit.*, I, pt. II, 23.

Secrétaire et son Gentilhomme de chambre qui étoit fort aimé à Londres, sous prétexte de complimenter le Protecteur, mais en effet, pour d'autres desseins plus cachés » (1). Monaldeschi is meant as the *gentilhomme*, doubtless, under the « Madalschi » of Leti, as Arckenholtz explains in a note. This incident may be referred to the year 1657. It must have occurred before November, the date of the death of Monaldeschi. There is no evidence that the person called the *Secrétaire* was Gilbert, nor that the journey is the one alluded to by Ménage, but there is a possibility of such identity. A mission for the queen would have explained Gilbert's absence from his royal mistress, his presence in Paris permitting the business of securing the *privilèges* of the dramatic works he brought with him, finding his publisher, and taking a journey to England. Meanwhile evidence of his interest in poetry and especially in the group of players with whom he must have been on intimate terms is seen in the two contributions from Gilbert to the *vers liminaires* which accompany *La Muse naissante du Petit Beauchasteau*. This is a slender volume of verse by the gifted young son of the actor and actress, Frédéric and Madeleine de Beauchasteau (2), published by Sarcy and de Luyne in 1657. Gilbert introduces the young author in a quatrain which appears below the frontispiece of Apollo touching his lyre. An *épigramme* by Gilbert in which the father is complimented, as well as the son, is the seventh among the *vers liminaires*. *La Muse naissante* returns the compliment with an epigram on Gilbert's *Endimion* (3).

What one would most wish to know about Gilbert during the year 1657-58 is how much knowledge he had of the assassination of Monaldeschi. Had he witnessed the atrocity or had knowledge of it from any persons

(1) *Loc. cit.*

(2) Members of the *Troupe Royale*, cf. CHAPPUZEAU, *Le Théâtre français*, Lyon, 1674, pp. 185-207.

(3) P. 151.

concerned in the act, would it have been possible for him to refrain from using the material thus offered for tragedy? It may be a question whether the original of Felismant in *le Courtisan parfait* was not Monaldeschi (1). A *pendant* to this piece in which the tragic end of the favorite was set forth would have given Gilbert fame to a degree now denied him. In spite of Christine's frequently expressed desire to come to Paris and her prayers to Mazarin to intercede for this privilege, the coveted « invitation » did not come until February (2). The queen was in the city from the twenty-fourth of that month until March 18 (3). A few days after her arrival Loret notes the fact of the queen's pleasure in the presentation of *les Amours de Diane et d'Endimion* (4). Christine sailed from Toulon, disembarked at Leghorn, and reached Rome the fifteenth of May. Was Gilbert with her? The question can be answered only by inference. Christine's avowed motive for the trip into northern Europe was business in regard to her income from Sweden, which had not been paid her. Although she was suspected of deeper motives of a political nature, the collection of revenues from Sweden must have been a true reason, if not the most important one, for the visit. In this connection the ode by Gilbert to the King of Sweden, which is included in *les Poésies diverses*, and which is there dated 1658, is an interesting contribution. The tribute from the *Résident* may have been part of a campaign planned by the queen. Possibly Gilbert was sent to Sweden with his ode and requests from his royal mistress, for another was left in Paris : « Elle laissait pour la représenter à Paris, le duc de Castelnuovo, promu grand écuyer à la place de Monal-

(1) Cf. chap. VIII, sec. 3, below.

(2) Cf. ARCKENHOLTZ, *op. cit.*, I, partie II, p. 24 ; BILDT, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

(3) Cf. BILDT, *op. cit.*, p. 82, *Un des premiers jours du Carême* ; ARCKENHOLTZ, *op. cit.*, II, p. 26.

(4) *La Muze historique*, II, 450 (March 2, 1658).

desco » (1). At any rate we have no record of literary activity on Gilbert's part during the year 1658, save for the ode to the Swedish monarch. It might be presumed that the poet had left the employ of Christine, but for the titles still accorded him in the *privilège* and displayed upon the title-page of the piece published during the last month of 1659, *Arie et Petus* (2), and his designation as Christine's *agent* in Loret's notice of this tragedy (3). The ode to Mazarin was published the same year (4). It was republished under the date of 1660 (5), also. In the same year, 1660, Gilbert published his ode to the king (6).

The year 1660 saw Christine taking the long-contemplated journey to Sweden for the purpose of securing the income due her. She remained in Sweden nearly two years. It is evident that Gilbert did not accompany the queen upon this journey. The years 1660 and 1661 are marked by literary activity on the part of the secretary. The seventh of the month of May, 1660, was the occasion of Gilbert's endeavor to defend the outraged *Précieuses*. Perhaps at the solicitation of one of the ladies whose feelings were so deeply offended by Molière's satire, Gilbert wrote *la Vraye et fausse précieuses*, which had its *première* at the Petit Bourbon on the date indicated above. It was bought and paid for (7) after the third presentation of three consecutive nights, but had only nine presentations. In June and July a *reprise* of *les Amours de Diane et d'Endimion* (8) kept the name of Gilbert before the frequenters of the Petit Bourbon. In August his *Huon de Bordeaux* (9) was seen, on the fifth of the month and several times

(1) BILDT, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

(2) Cf. below, chap. vii.

(3) Cf. below, chap. xi.

(4) Cf. below, p. , n° 1.

(5) Cf. below, chap. xi.

(6) Cf. below, chap. xi.

(7) Cf. *Registre de Lagrange*, under date of 1660, May 7 ; also, below, chap. ix.

(8) Cf. *Ibid.*, dates, June 25 to July 18 ; also below, chap. vi.

(9) Cf. *Ibid.*, date cited.

during that month and September. On Saturday, the fourth of September, Gilbert was honored by having this piece performed before the king (1). The following year Gilbert produced a new piece for Molière's company called *le Tyran d'Egyple* (2). This appeared in February, was played upon Mardi Gras, and several times during the month of its introduction and the following month. In June the *Tyran* was given with the *première* of Molière's *Escolle des Maris* (3). After two performances of the double bill thus arranged, *Huon* was substituted for *le Tyran* (4). Through the month of July, Gilbert's *Huon de Bordeaux* was seen by the crowded houses which were attracted by Molière's new comedy. As accompaniment to *l'Ecole des Maris*, *Huon* was played on a "tour". It was given at Vau for Fouquet (5) and still held its place upon the double bill when the company returned to Paris July 15, "pour jouer *Huon de Bordeaux* et *l'Escolle des Maris*", as the entry of that date in the *Registre de Lagrange* states. No trace remains of Gilbert's three plays produced during these two years. Only one has received comment which has come down to us, and that comment is slight; *Le Dictionnaire des Précieuses* permits us to know that *la Vraie et Fausse Précieuses* aimed at *la louange des Précieuses* (6), and that the *satyre* was more successful than the *panegyrique* (7). It is too evident that Gilbert's piece failed. In 1661 *Poésies diverses* (8) appeared. Its *privilège* is the old one granted in 1654. Gilbert still uses his titles of *Résident*, and of *Secrétaire des Commandemens* of the Queen of Sweden.

The author of the *Dictionnaire des Précieuses* as-

(1) Cf. *Ibid.*, date cited.

(2) Cf. *Ibid.*, 1661, February 25.

(3) Cf. *Ibid.* 1661, June 24.

(4) Cf. *Ibid.*, 1661, June 28.

(5) Cf. *Registre de Lagrange*, under date of 1661, July.

(6) Cf. *op. cit.*, I, 190.

(7) *Loc. cit.*

(8) Cf. chap.

cribes Gilbert's success in securing the queen's patronage to his quality of *bel esprit* : « C'est en effet en qualité de bel esprit que la reine de Suède s'attacha l'auteur d'Endymion, d'Arrie et Poetus » (1). An explanation of the beginning of the relation with Christine may be provided by Saumaise, but little assistance in dating the appointment to office is afforded. The works cited are those published in 1657 and 1659 (2) respectively, or after Gilbert had assumed his titles in connection with the publication of plays. The statement of Arckenholtz that Gilbert was « Secrétaire en François de Christine, et après, son Résident en France où il étoit encore en 1657 » (3), is regrettably insufficient evidence for dating the beginning of the secretaryship. The earliest dated evidence is the letter to Mazarin of July 31, 1656 (4), cited above (5), in which Gilbert is seen already in possession of the post. A *madrigal* to the queen of Sweden included in the *Poésies diverses*, makes the sort of allusion to the recompense received by the secretary that is frequently found in accounts of the business dealings of the extravagant and bankrupt queen. The poet says :

En servant cette Reyne égale aux Amazones
 Je n'auray pas perdu six ans :
 Car qui sçait donner des Couronnes,
 Sçait faire d'autres presens. (6)

If in 1661 the poet had served the queen six years his service must date from at least 1656. There is a possibility of the *madrigal* having been written before the date of publication, as are many of the poems of the volume. In this case it might be possible to date Gilbert's

(1) *Op. cit.*, II, 239.

(2) Cf. below, chap. et

(3) *Op. cit.*, I, 255, et note.

(4) *Aff. Etr. Fonds fr* n° 900, fol. 236.

(5) Cf. above, p.

(6) P. 152.

service from Christine's establishment in Rome. But the verses to the queen are the last in collection, appearing just before its final division, *les Poésies chrestiennes* (1), which form the last group and may have been written at different times. A definite word from Gilbert, definitely dated, occurs in a letter of Chapelain's of December 1, 1661. The poet's advice to another, through Chapelain as intermediary, is to distrust Christine's promises of high recompense for service. He is quoted as referring to « appointemens plus propres à estre promis qu'à estre tenus (2) ». The writer adds: « luy mesme qui la sert depuis quatre ans n'ayant pas touché un double de ce qu'Elle luy avoit assignés » (3). But the *quatre ans* of Chapelain's letter is a mistake so far as the secretaryship is concerned, since Gilbert was acting in that capacity in July, 1656, and was still exercising the functions of *Résident* at the date of the letter, and even somewhat later, as is attested by a letter from Chapelain to Huet, December 8, of the same year; in this letter the secretary is characterized as « affamé de servitude » (4). It is probable that the « four years » begin with the appointment as *Résident*. The author still uses both titles upon the titlepage of *les Amours d'Ovide* (5), published in 1663, but omits them from *les Amours d'Angélique et de Médor* (6) the following year. In all probability Gilbert withdrew from his office during the queen's long stay in Sweden.

Before the publication of the last named pieces, however, a play which was never published was produced, and with some *éclat*, since it was given before *Monsieur* and his bride. *Théagène* (7) is praised by

(1) Cf. *Poés. div.*, p. 153.

(2) TAM. DE LAR., *Lettres de Chapelain*, II, 179, n. 3.

(3) *Ibid.*, *ibid.*

(4) Cf. *Ibid.*, II, 183. n. 7.

(5) Cf., below, chap. VIII, sec. I.

(6) Cf. *Ibid.*, *ibid.*, sec. II.

(7) Cf. below, chap. IX, sec. II.

Loret (1) upon the occasion of its première, July 15, 1662. *Les Amours d'Ovide* and *les Amours d'Angélique et de Médor* mark the two years succeeding *Théagène*. About the same time *le Courtisan Parfait* must have been played, though we have no record of its performance, and it is believed by most commentators that it was never presented. However, it was known to Loret's successor, Boursault, who mentions the title in July, 1665. Gilbert seems important enough to Boursault to be quoted as one of the authors who have urged him to continue the *Gazette* after the death of Loret :

Encor un Auteur qui veut presque
Que je fasse aussi du Burlesque
Et qui croit que c'est mon Talent,
C'est Gilbert, cet Esprit Galant. (2)

In the same *Gazette* Gilbert is mentioned again that year under the date of July 18, by Mayolas, in a list of authors, called *beaux esprits* :

Les Chapelains et les Corneilles
Qui produisent tant de merveilles,
Les Scuderys et les Gombauds,
Les Boyers, Gilberts et Quinauts (3).

It is probable that Gilbert's comedy *les Intrigues amoureuses* (4) was seen on the stage in 1664, though its *première* is assigned to the year 1666 by the frères Parfaict. Certain textual details indicate its composition at about the date of *les Amours d'Angélique et de Médor* (5). The work was printed in 1667, the year which saw the presentation of the unpublished *Ero et Léandre*,

(1) *Muze historique*, III, 527.

(2) *Les Continuateurs de Loret...*, Paris, 1882, I, 121.

(3) *Op cit*, I, 101.

(4) Cf. below, chap. ix.

(5) Cf. *ibid.*

noted by Robinet, August, 1667 (1). The following year *le Courtisan parfait* was published at Grenoble with no name of author, but only the enigmatical initials D. G. L. B. T. (2). Apparently the publisher received the manuscript from a person who either himself did not know the identity of the author or for some reason unknown to us wished to conceal it. The publisher's introductory word makes a promise of more works by the same author (3), which implies that he had been assured that the author was writing at the time, and with at least moderate productivity. Since the work was known to Boursault in 1665, and supposedly to his readers (4), the probability is that it was composed several years before publication.

In the ten years since his return to dramatic composition in 1657, Gilbert has, then, to his credit seven published and five unpublished pieces whose presentation is proved by mention in *lettres* or *gazettes*. In addition he composed the odes noted above, published the *Poésies diverses*, and the two poems entitled *l'Art de plaire*. This volume of published work does not represent prodigious productivity, yet, considering the time given to his secretarial duties, it may be claimed for Gilbert that he was diligent in poetic composition. With the publication of *le Courtisan parfait*, the author seems to disappear again from the world of letters for several years. When it is remembered that *le Courtisan*, mysteriously published at Grenoble in 1668, was already known, apparently, in Paris in 1665, and that *les Intrigues amoureuses*, published in 1667, had been seen in Paris a year or two previous to that date, the second period of silence that intervenes in Gilbert's literary career may with some confidence be dated from 1665, or 1666. New secretarial duties and new

(1) Cf. below, *ibid.*, sec. II.

(2) Cf. below, chap. VIII, sec. III

(3) Cf. below, *ibid.*

(4) Cf. *ibid.*, *ibid.*

occupations (1) may explain the lapse in the artistic record. Possibly work was produced which was unsuccessful or of which no report comes down to us. Whatever may be the reason for the silence which is punctuated, so far as we are able to discover, only by the allusions cited below (2) in Boursault's satire published in 1669 and mention of one of his early works in Poisson's *Baron de la Crasse* (1662) (3), nothing further is heard of Gilbert until about 1671. At this time, when, because of the difficulty about Perrin (4), the promoter of the new form of entertainment known as *opera* turned to Gilbert, it was not an unnatural thing to do. The poet's reputation had evidently been sustained during the interval of silence. As is related in the chapter devoted to Gilbert's opera (5), when Sourdéac appealed to him for a libretto, *les Peines et les plaisirs de l'amour* was composed. In either the latter part of 1671 or early in 1672 the opera was produced. If Gilbert's silence was broken by the composition of the opera in the earlier year, five or six unproductive years still remain unaccounted for.

It cannot be credited to the beauty of the verses written by Gilbert that the name of the heroine of his work was thenceforth given to M^{lle} Brignolle who sang the rôle (6). It is universally conceded that Cambert's charming music won the honor for the soprano. However, the opera had sufficient vogue to keep Gilbert's name

(1) Cf. « Affamé de... servitude », *Lettres de Chapelain*, II, 183, n. 7.

(2) Cf. p. 000.

(3) In *le Baron de la Crasse* is found a list of titles which were in the *répertoire* in 1662. Le Baron asks for a certain play, being told that they do not have that piece, he gives a list of those they have. One verse is : *Téléphonte, Arbiran, Laure persécutée*. Cf. POISSON (Raymond), *Œuvres*, 2^e éd., Paris, 1687, I, 5 (p. 90) ; also FOURNEL, *Les Contemporains de Molière*, II, 3-6, and LUCAS, *Dictionnaire... du théâtre français depuis son origine*, pp. 212, 213.

(4) Cf. below, chap. x.

(5) Cf. *ibid.*

(6) Cf. below, chap. x.

before the playgoing public for some time. Doubtless this success would have been followed by other productions in this *genre*, for Gilbert's delicate fancy and skill in composing lyrics would have won him further opportunities for operatic composition, but the monopoly granted Lulli forced out all competitors (1). Whether on account of the fortunes of art, subject to court intrigue, or for some other reason, Gilbert again becomes silent, publishing nothing for ten years until, in 1681, his translation of fifty psalms shows that he had not spent the entire decade, if indeed any portion of it, in idleness.

This work, preceded by an interesting preface, attests the author's scholarship, but gives no information about its acquisition (2). At least a portion of the last period of silence may have been devoted to study. The divergence from subjects treated hitherto might presumably be the result of some event in the author's life. But the *Préface* which describes the undertaking, the aim, and method, assigns no definite motivation (3). The author wishes to provide a usable French form of the sacred songs, that believers on earth may participate in one of the chief exercises of heavenly beings (4). The simplicity of the manner of statement gives no evidence of anything out of the usual in Gilbert's interest in sacred writings. The well-known case of Conrart (5) whose severe attack of gout turned his mind to religious contemplation and his hand to the writing of a new version of the Psalms in French may or may not have been duplicated in the case of Gilbert. He himself has not told us anything on this point, nor has any one else supplied the want.

(1) Cf. PRUNIÈRES, *L'Opéra italien en France avant Lulli*, Paris, 1913, p. 362.

(2) Cf. below, chap. XI.

(3) Cf. *Préface cit.*, p.

(4) Cf. *Ibid.*

(5) Cf. BOVET, Félix. *Histoire du Psautier des églises réformées*, Neuchâtel, 1872 ; and chap. XI, below.

The years between 1657 and 1666, or 1667, seem to have been the years of greatest activity in Gilbert's literary career and to have been those of his greatest success. During this time twelve pieces for the theatre were composed and other poetical work (1) produced. He was evidently, at this time, a well known figure in the literary world of Paris. In spite of this fact, there is little allusion in either the private or public comment of the period which gives a hint of his personality. Loret's early references to Gilbert usually accord him the epithet *docte*. This is not to be considered seriously as a contemporary estimate of the poet's scholarship. Loret is given to indiscriminating praise, and the same epithet characterizes in his verses too many authors to permit the belief that it is singularly merited by Gilbert. Loret's praise of the poet in his notice of *Arie et Petus* is particularly effusive. He celebrates.

.....la Plume immortelle
De l'excellent Monsieur Gilbert,
Rare Ecrivain, Auteur expert,
Qu'on prize en toute Compagnie,
Et qui par son noble génie,
Poly, Sçavant, intelligent,
De Christine est le digne Agent (2).

One suspects that the praise is given rather to the *Résident* of the Queen of Sweden than to the author of the work. As is justly remarked by M. Fournel, who cites this tribute in his study of Gilbert : « La banalité des éloges de Loret leur ôte presque toute valeur » (3). Perhaps more discrimination may be discerned in the characterization of Robinet, who in his *lettre* in which *Ero et Léandre* is praised, mentions the author as,

Le délicat Monsieur Gilbert (4).

(1) Cf. above.

(2) LORET, *op. cit.*, III, 109 (dated Sept. 27, 1659).

(3) *Les Contemporains de Molière*, II, 3.

(4) *Les Continueurs de Loret*, II, 980.

This epithet is used by Chapelain, also, who, in his *Mémoire de quelques gens de lettres vivants en 1662*, says : « Gilbert est un esprit délicat, duquel on a des odes, de petits poèmes et plusieurs pièces de théâtre pleines de bons vers ; ce qui l'avoit fait retenir par la Reine de Suède, pour secrétaire de ses commandemens » (1). About the same time the *froideur* of the poet is the subject of amused comment by Boursault. The *Satyre des satyres* (2) by this author refers to Gilbert as an « auteur galant », who composes « à la glace » and who rimes « en tremblant » (3) :

C'est un Auteur galant mais qui feroit scrupule
De se lever sans feu pendant la canicule
C'est G*** (4).

The dialogue of the *Satyre* develops the idea that even upon the hottest days, this delicate author is never warm and that

Apollon et G*** sont toujours mal ensemble ;
Quand tout le monde brûle, on le trouve qui tremble. (5)

The most absurd stroke of the satire is in the lines :

Un de ses bons Amis que je vis hyer au soir,
Me sôutint par deux fois, que l'estant allé voir,
Il trouve son Laquais qui luy chaufait Dimanche
L'épingle qui luy faut pour attacher sa manche. (6)

In this vein the *raillerie* continues for several lines, and the full name replaces the abbreviation in :

Le plaisant de l'affaire est que Gilbert le croye (7).

(1) *Lettres de Chapelain* (ed. cit.), I, 657, n. 2.

(2) Published in 1667.

(3) Sc. 6. (4) *Ibid.* (5) *Ibid.* (6) *Ibid.*

(7) Sc. 6.

However, Chapelain charges Gilbert with egotism in the *Memoire* cited above. He says : « Il n'a pas une petite opinion de lui ; » he furthermore criticizes Gilbert as impractical, calling him, « l'architecte téméraire et chimérique de tout ce faux édifice, ce bastisseur de chasteaux en Espagne » (1). This point of view is echoed by the anonymous author of *la Pompe de Scarron* (2) who gives the impression that Gilbert was jealous of precedence and desired to profit so far as possible by the advantage of his rank. He implies, however, the possession of wit on the part of the object of his comment. He says : « Monsieur Gilbert fit voir en disputant son rang, combien il avoit d'esprit » (3). For the evocation of a personality these notes on Gilbert are most insufficient but they serve to rescue from complete oblivion one who often amused, or touched, the visitors to the theatres of Paris. They in some measure justify the words of Phérotée de la Croix « a eu quelque réputation dans ce siècle » (4).

How can one account for the fact that the pointed satire of Boileau spared Gilbert ? It is impossible that the poet who was known to Chapelain, Conrart, and other leaders of the literary group, who was the author of sixteen (5) pieces for the theatre by the time that the famous *Satire IX* (6) was composed, and whose *Poésies diverses* had been known in collected form for six years, could be unknown to the chief critic of his epoch. Since Despréaux subscribed to the theory that

Qui ne vole au sommet, tombe au plus bas degré, (7)

(1) Cf. *Lettres de Chapelain*, ed. cit., II, 188, n. 3.

(2) Published by Ribou, Paris, 1660. The author was probably Saumaize (or Somaise), author of *le Dictionnaire des Prétieuses*.

(3) P. 19.

(4) *Op. cit.*, p. 393.

(5) Cf. below, chap. IX, sec. II, fifteen listed, *Ero et Léandre*, Ju 1667, brings the number up to sixteen.

(6) 1667.

(7) *Satire*, IX, v. 26.

how did our poet, for whom the claim of having reached the heights can not be made, escape the accusation of having fallen to the depths? Besides, Gilbert's pretention to notice from Despréaux is enhanced by the fact of his authorship of a portion of a poem which Boileau is said to have ridiculed. In Molière's *Femmes Savantes* is printed a portion of Cotin's sonnet beginning

Vostre prudence est endormie (1).

These verses, taken from an *épigramme* by Cotin to M^{lle} de Longueville, appeared in the published works of the *abbé* printed in 1659 (2). It is said that Boileau called the attention of Molière to the lines and suggested that he use them in his satiric piece. It will be remembered that Armande is made to say. :

A *prudence endormie* il faut rendre les armes (3).

This offensive figure had appeared in 1647 in Gilbert's *Hypolite* (4). In the last act of his tragedy Gilbert makes the repentant Thésée say :

Dans le sein de l'erreur ma *prudence endormie* (5).

If these words become the object of Boileau's scorn and of Molière's satire when used by Cotin how does the original author of the phrase escape judgment? Delaporte (6) has pointed out a few of many passages which might well have occasioned satiric remark from Boileau. Both from the point of view of Gilbert's fame and of the vulnerability of his work there seems sufficient reason

(1) III, 2.

(2) *Œuvres Meslées* de l'abbé COTIN, Loyson, Paris, 1659 (in-12°). Also, same, 1663.

(3) *Femmes Savantes*, III, 2.

(4) COURBÉ, Paris.

(5) V, 5.

(6) Cf. DELAPORTE, P. V., *Du Merveilleux dans la littérature française*, Paris, 1891, pp. 190-191, 198, 237; cf. also, below, chap. XI, sec. I.

that he should have attracted the unfavorable comment of the author of the ninth *Satire*. In Boursault's answer to that work, *la Satyre des satyres* (1), the immunity of the poet is remarked. Speaking of Boileau, one of the characters of this work says :

D'où vient qu'il ne dit rien de cet Auteur galant
 Qui compose à la glace et qui rime en tremblant ?

 C'est un Auteur galant
 C'est G*** (1).

Neither Boursault, nor his personages answer this question, nor can we. It seems possible that the answer may lie in the fact of a personal friendship between the critic and one whose work he may not have admired.

It was perhaps with a feeling of some security in his position as one of the well-considered poets of the period that Gilbert proffered his request to be permitted to write the history of the life of Louis le Grand. In the *épître dédicatoire* of *les Poésies diverses* the poet makes his petition to his royal protector : « Pour moy toute la grâce que je demande à V. M... C'est qu'il me soit permis ... de composer l'Histoire de sa Vie. Je sçay bien qu'elle pourroit faire choix d'une Personne plus capable que moy : mais je ne lasse pas de me persuader que le grand zele que j'ay pour sa gloire ne donne à mon travail un heureux succez, si elle daigne seulement m'honorer de ses commandemens... ». In all probability this request was never granted, at least no record to that effect has been discovered.

The later years of the poet seem to have been spent in distress, or a condition near to that deplorable state. Through Chapelain's letter (3) in which the fact of the

(1) Boursault, E. *La Satyre des satyres*, Paris, 1667.

(2) Sc. 6.

(3) Cf. p. , above.

non-payment of his salary by the Queen of Sweden is mentioned, one reason for Gilbert's poverty is seen. Another may be inferred from the preface of *les Amours d'Angélique et de Médor*, where the poet states that he has produced sixteen pieces for the theatre « sans en avoir tiré autre avantage que celui de les avoir présentées à ce que la France a de plus auguste et de plus éminent » (1). The poverty of his last days is generally considered to have been absolute (2).

The generous protestant Hervart, at that time *Contrôleur général des finances* took Gilbert into his home where the poet remained until his death (3). The doors of the same house opened to La Fontaine in his later years, and in this home the great fabulist, too, died.

Gilbert seems to have been less in need of friends and distinguished patronage than of financial resources. He secured the patronage of the king, to whom two works are addressed (4), of the duc d'Orléans, of Richelieu, Colbert, Mazarin, Lionne, and Fouquet. Among his patronesses Gilbert has many distinguished women. Naturally first in such a list is the name of the Queen of Sweden, whom Gilbert served six or seven years and to whom some of his works are dedicated. The name of Richelieu's niece, the duchesse d'Aiguillon, the patroness of the poet's first two works for the theatre, is succeeded by the names of the duchesses of Sully and of Rohan, and of *la Grande Mademoiselle*. In later life Hervart, the

(1) *Préface, op. cit.*

(2) Upon a fly-leaf of a volume of Gilbert's plays in the *Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal* appears a manuscript note upon the author. The last sentence is : « Quoique résident de Suède il étoit gueux et à l'aumône de M. Dhervart ». Upon consulting M. Henri Martin, then *administrateur* of the Arsenal, as to the probable date of this note, the writer of this essay was told that it was undoubtedly an eighteenth century hand.

(3) Cf. GOUJET, *Bibliothèque française...*, p. 87 ; TITON du TILLET, *le Parnasse français*, p. 387 ; BEAUCHAMPS, *Recherches...*, II, 168 ; DOPPING, *Barthélemy Heywarth*, Paris, 1879, pp. 340-341.

(4) *Les Amours d'Angélique et de Médor* and *les Poésies diverses*.

Contrôleur général des finances, offered him a home. The list of his friends, so far as known to us, and of his patrons and patronesses, as known from his dedications, is a distinguished one.

The authenticated professional engagements of the poet seem to have been with women. His service to the duchesse de Rohan and to the Queen of Sweden, as secretary, and to the latter as *Résident*, suggest that his associations were with women rather than with men. Gilbert's renown as a *bel esprit* (1) may have been at least in part responsible for this fact. The author of *le Dictionnaire des Précieuses* expresses the belief that it was the quality of *bel esprit* which attracted the attention of his royal patron and won him a place in her household (2). To Chapelain the choice by the queen seemed due to the poet's literary skill (3). Christine called him « mon beau génie » (4). He must, in any case, have been socially eligible to have been admitted to such distinguished company.

It is not beyond the range of the possible that Christine exerted, consciously or unconsciously, an influence on Gilbert. Such influence may be inferred from the difference in the character of the poet's work after he entered her service. Elevation of thought and expression, interest in the tragic theme and in the triumph of virtue, and emphasis on character and native worth mark the first group of his dramatic writings: *Marguerite de France*, *Téléphonte*, *Rodogune*, *Hypolite* and *Sémiramis*. A lighter treatment, a less serious regard for moral qualities, the use of subtlety and of the technique of *galanterie*, and emphasis on success rather than character distinguish the second group, such as

(1) Cf. the verses of Mayolas, cited p. 000, above, and the *Dict. des Précieuses*, II, 239, also cited above, p. 000.

(2) Cf. *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*

(3) Cf. *Lettres*, *ed. cit.*, I, 657.

(4) Cf. DOPPING, *Barthélemy Herwarth*, Paris, 1879, p. 340.

les Amours de Diane et d'Endimion, Chresphonte, les Amours d'Ovide, le Courtisan Parfait, etc.

Association with a court in which *galanterie* was cultivated may be responsible for the change; or the change in taste which, after the Fronde, favored less tragic themes (1) may have occasioned the altered style and viewpoint. The pastoral atmosphere of some of the later group, and especially of the opera (which may be added to those cited above), may be attributed to the influence of the Italian sojourn, though the first of the group was written in obedience to the command of the poet's royal patroness (2). The fact of his secondary position among the dramatic writers of his time must be attributed first, to his limited gifts, and second, to the rise of the great geniuses, Corneille, Molière and Racine. Their work overshadowed that of a diligent and gifted author, who would have been given much higher rank had he antedated by a few years the period of splendor of the French theater. It is with no desire to claim for Gilbert a higher place among authors of the seventeenth century than he deserves, that this study is undertaken. It aims, rather, to rescue from oblivion one whose contribution to the dramatic work of his period was not negligible and who initiated ideas which the foremost artists did not disdain to imitate and to use to their enduring renown. Gilbert's *Rodogune* was written in competition with Corneille; Molière's troupe produced a number of his plays; he died only a few years after the *Phèdre* of Racine was produced and must have experienced the not unmixed pleasure of recognizing the successful development of his own interpretation of the characters of that tragedy.

(1) Cf. BÉDIER et HAZARD, *op cit.*, I, 284.

(2) Paul Lacroix ascribes the inspiration for the plays whose titles begin with « les Amours », to an effort to condone the conduct of Christine. Cf. *Catalogue Soleinne*, n° 1191.

APPENDIX I

A CHRONOLOGY OF THE WORKS OF GILBERT

- Marguerite de France*, tragi-comédie, Paris, Courbé, 1641, 4° ; s. l., sur l'imprimé à Paris, 1642, 12°.
- Téléphonte*, tragi-comédie, Paris, Quinet, 1642, 4° ; 1643, 4° ; 1643, 12° ; de Luyne, 1643, 12°. Reprinted with title of *Philoclée et Téléphonte*, in *Théâtre françois*, 1705, 12° ; *Théâtre françois*, 1735, 12°.
- A la Reyne, Ode* [to Anne d'Autriche], s. l., s. d., 1643, 4°.
- Rodogune*, tragi-comédie, Paris, Sommaville, 1646, 4° ; also printed by Courbé and by Quinet.
- Hypolite, ou le Garçon insensible*, tragédie, Paris, Courbé, 1647, 4°.
(*Achévé d'imprimé*, October, 1646.)
- Sémiramis*, tragédie, Paris, Courbé, 1647, 4°.
- Panégryrique des dames* [prose], Paris, Courbé, 1650, 4°.
- A M. Beys sur ses Poésies [vers liminaires]*, 1652.
- L'Art de plaire*, Paris, de Luyne, 1655, 12°.
- Les Amours de Diane et d'Endimion*, tragédie, Paris, de Luyne, 1657, 12° ; Amsterdam, Elzevir, 1657, 12° ; Rouen, 1661, 12° ; Amsterdam, Wolfgang, 1662, 12°.
- Vers liminaires in La Muse Naissante du Petit de Beauchasteau*, 1656.
- Ode à Son Eminence*, 1659.
- Chresphonte, ou le retour des Héraclides dans le Péloponèse*, tragi-comédie, Paris, de Luyne, 1659, 12°.
- Arie et Petus, ou les Amours de Néron*, tragédie, Paris, de Luyne, 1659, 12°.
- Ode à Son Eminence* [reprinting], 1660.
- Au roi sur son mariage*, 1660.
- La Vraye et fausse préieuses* (unpublished), presented, May, 1660.‡
- Huon de Bordeaux* (unpublished), presented, August, 1660.
- Le Tyran d'Egypte* (unpublished), presented, February, 1661.
- Les Poésies diverses*, Paris, de Luyne, 1661, 12°.
- Les Amours de Diane et d'Endimion*, Rouen, 1661, 12° ; Amsterdam, Wolfgang, 1662, 12°.
- Théagène* (unpublished), presented, July, 1662.
- Les Amours d'Ovide*, pastorale, Paris, Barbin, 1663, 12° ; also printed by Loyson and by de Luyne ; Amsterdam, Elzevir, 1663, 12°.

Les Amours d'Angélique et de Médor, Paris, de Luyne, 1664, 12° ; also printed by Thos. Joly, Quinet et Fr. Mauger — two printings by last named.

Les Intrigues amoureuses, comédie, Paris, Quinet, 1667, 12° ; also printed by de Luyne and by Joly ; Amsterdam, Elzevir, 1667, 12°.

Le Courtisan parfait, Grenoble, Nicolaß, 1668, 12°.

Les Peines et les plaisirs de l'Amour, s. l., s. d. 1672, 4° ; s. l., s. d., 12° ; Paris, Olivier de Varennes, 1672, 12° (twice printed) ; Paris, Christopher Ballard, fol., 1672 ; Paris, Christopher Ballard, 1703, 12°.

Philoclée et Téléphonte. See *Téléphonte*.

Les Pseaumes en vers français, Paris, Cellier, 1680, 12° ; [with musical notation] Rouen, Veuve de Pierre Cailloué, 1680, 12° ; [with music] Paris, Cellier, 1680, 12° ; [with music] Rouen, Cailloué 1680, 12° ; [with music] Paris, veuve Olliviar de Varennes, 1680, 8° ; [with music] Amsterdam, Wolfgang, 1681, 12° ; [with music] Charente, Samuel Perier, 1682, 12°.

VITA

Eleanor Jane Pellet was born in New Jersey, but received her education in Chicago, to which city her family removed during her childhood. Several trips to Europe had deepened an interest in foreign languages. In the spring of 1915, as an unclassified student, the subject of this sketch entered the University of Chicago, taking advanced courses in French. Later she classified, with Romance Languages as her major subject. She received the degree of Ph. B. in August, 1917, and the A.M. in June, 1919. During the year 1918-1919 she was an assistant in the Romance Language department. Positions and periods of study, since, have been as follows : 1919-1920, instructor in Romance Languages and head of the Italian section, Goucher College; 1920, four months spent in France and Italy ; 1920-1921, assistant professor at Goucher College ; half-time work at Johns Hopkins University undertaken at this time in candidacy for the doctor's degree ; June, 1921 — October, 1922, study and travel in France and Italy ; 1922-1923, residence at the Johns Hopkins University ; summer, 1923, research upon dissertation subject at Harvard University ; 1923-1924 , assistant professor of French at Carleton College, Minnesota ; 1924-1925, research upon dissertation subject in Paris (on leave of absence from Carleton College) ; the headship of the Romance Language department at Lake Erie College, Ohio, since September, 1925, thanks to the courtesy of a release by Carleton College ; 1926, summer, research in Paris and travel in France and Italy.

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